

well. Not only have they failed to attract wide bipartisan support in the past, even if they did enjoy bipartisan support they wouldn't create any jobs. The President knows raising taxes is the last thing you want to do to spur job creation. He said so himself. Yet that is basically all he is proposing: temporary stimulus to be paid for later by permanent tax hikes so that when the dust clears and the economy is no better off than it was after the first stimulus folks find themselves with an even bigger tax bill than today.

The President can call this bill whatever he wants, but in reality all he is doing is proposing a hodgepodge of retread ideas aimed at convincing people that a temporary fix is permanent and that it will create permanent jobs, and then daring Republicans to vote against it.

I think most people see through all of this. I think most Americans are smarter than that. I think they know our economic challenges are more serious than this and that they require serious long-term solutions. I think the American people realize we can do a lot better.

I have talked with a lot of job creators over the past few weeks, including many in my own State. It is no secret that they need to create jobs. Every one of them says the same thing. Yet the President refuses to do any of it.

If the President is truly interested in growing the economy and putting Americans back to work, then he will leave the temporary proposals and the half measures and the tax hikes aside. He will consult with both parties and work with us on a plan that indicates he has learned something from the failures of the past 2 years and which actually has a chance of attracting bipartisan support.

He could start with a permanent reform of our broken tax system, reducing out-of-control Federal regulations, and by passing the trade bills that have been sitting on his desk since Inauguration Day 2009. All of this is doable, all of it should attract bipartisan support, and all of it would actually create jobs. That would be a jobs plan worthy of the seriousness of the moment.

But make no mistake, what the President proposed so far is not serious, and it is not a jobs plan. After what we learned yesterday that should be clear to everyone.

I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10

minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

The Senator from Illinois.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S JOBS SPEECH

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I listened carefully to the statement made by the Republican leader. I noticed that for the last few days the Republicans have been very quiet and calm and circumspect in their reaction to the President's speech to a joint session of Congress last Thursday night. The President, of course, came to us and said this economy needs a helping hand; we have to step in and do something. We have to act and act now. He came up with a list of proposals Thursday night that I think really do address what America needs: First and foremost, to create jobs—that is the No. 1 priority. The President says we will do this by creating tax incentives for small businesses in particular to hire people who have been unemployed and to give raises to those who currently work.

He knows families are struggling across America, working families, middle-class families. Many of them are living paycheck to paycheck. A recent poll asked working families in America how many could come up with \$2,000 in 30 days, either from savings or borrowing, to meet a medical emergency, for example. It turns out barely half of the working American families polled can do so. Barely half of them could come up with \$2,000. It is a reminder to many of us who have a comfortable life that the vast majority of working families struggle every single month to make ends meet. President Obama understands that, and that is why he has proposed a payroll tax cut that will put more money in the hands of working families. In Illinois, it will be an average of about \$1,400 a year. I wish it were more, but it is a recognition by the President that to get this economy moving again, people have to have more confidence in their own situation at home and more confidence in the future. Giving working families this spending power can make that difference.

The President also understands and I am sure the Presiding Officer understands as well that many of the families who are unemployed now are desperate. I visited with many of them during the August recess, going to the Elgin Work Center and to others in McHenry County. I sat down with these people who have been out of work for months—some even years—and asked them: What is your day like? They come to these job centers, they sit down, and they work on their resumes. They pore through all of the want ads, they pore through all of the information about people seeking new employees, and they send out their resumes as quickly as possible. Of course, very few of them get any response at all.

It is a desperate situation. Some of them have lost their homes. Some of them are seeing their kids returning from college, unable to continue their studies because Dad is out of work. Some of the marriages that have been involved have been strained and some have failed because of this economic hardship. The President understands that, and I hope we do too.

Unemployment compensation is absolutely essential as a lifeline to these families, and the President makes that part of his package.

When I hear the Republican leader call these suggestions a hodgepodge, I don't think he is fair and I don't think he is just. Take a look at the specifics: incentives for businesses to hire new workers, payroll tax cuts for working families for more spending money in hand, unemployment compensation for those who are out of work so they can survive.

The President also focuses on critical people. How many of us in the last 48 hours have given a speech somewhere at home or here talking about the great first responders of 9/11? The policemen, the firefighters, the medical professionals who literally risked and some even gave their lives in response to that national emergency. We know what is happening across America. Many of these policemen and firefighters are losing their jobs, along with teachers. The President understands that, and he puts resources into saving some of those jobs so that we can have the protection we need in our communities and the teachers we need for the next generation of workers.

President Obama believes, and I agree, that we need to invest in America. When we build the infrastructure in America that will serve us in the 21st century, we create good-paying jobs right here at home. These are not jobs you can ship overseas. President Obama understands that. That is why that is a major part of his proposal. We are talking about highways and bridges and airports and ports and waterways and schools. The President understands that investment in America not only helps us today in invigorating the economy but will pay off for generations to come.

There were very few lines the President gave at his speech that drew standing applause from the Republican side. I felt at one point that the temperature of the Republican side of the aisle in the House Chamber was 40 degrees below that on the Democratic side. It was cold over there. There was one line they finally acknowledged, and that was when the President said: For goodness' sake, we owe it to our veterans who have come home to put them to work. To know that 10 percent of those people who risked their lives for America are now back home and in unemployment lines is absolutely unacceptable, and President Obama recognizes that in what he has called for to get this economy moving forward.

I don't think the Republican leader is fair in calling this a hodgepodge. It is

a carefully constructed plan to get this economy moving forward. What really troubles the Republican leader—and I know he said as much this morning—is that President Obama pays for it. Over and over, we hear from the Republican side: Don't add to the deficit. Pay for what you do.

The President came out yesterday with his proposal of how to pay for it. How does he pay for it? For one, he takes away the subsidy to the oil companies. There is a Federal subsidy that comes out of the Treasury and goes to oil companies across America, raises gasoline prices through the roof, making them able to enjoy the biggest business profits in the history of the United States. Isn't it time to cut back on that subsidy and use those resources for the President's plan to get the economy moving forward?

The President limits the tax deductions and credits for those in higher income categories. I find it hard to understand why the Republican position is that we cannot ask those who are well off, the most comfortable people in America, to pay one penny more in taxes. Their position is absolute: not one penny more in taxes for the wealthiest in America. I think it is fair to limit the tax cuts to the wealthiest so that we can provide tax cuts for working families. That is sensible. It is not only morally right, it is economically right, and it troubles me when I hear the Republican leader reject that out of hand.

It appears that the warmth of the August Sun is cooling now in September, and those who went home and heard how unhappy America is with congressional roadblocks and obstruction have forgotten that lesson. They have forgotten what they heard. They are coming back now and saying that once again we are going to have a face-off and a confrontation.

#### DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. DURBIN. There is one other area I wish to speak to. I know my colleague from New York is going to be on the floor shortly. The area I wish to speak to is disaster relief.

I strongly support the disaster relief funding bill. As Americans undertake the physically and emotionally difficult task of rebuilding, cleaning up, and recovering from hurricanes and flooding and even earthquakes, we must see that the Disaster Relief Fund is there so they can get back to their own lives as quickly as possible.

The year 2011 has been a record year when it comes to natural disasters. The cost of recovery from Hurricane Irene alone could reach \$1.5 billion. We have seen it this year in Illinois. It has been tough from Chicago to Cairo in the southern portion of our State. We have had blizzards and floods and tornadoes and troubles all around. Our State, like most other States, has seen the damage and has felt it personally. People are trying to put their homes back together again.

Here is a photo—I saw this in person when I visited the State earlier this spring—around Cairo in the southern part of the State. It was an awful situation. We had flooding along the Ohio River that troubled and bothered the folks who live in southern Illinois as well as Kentucky and adjoining States, Missouri. Some of our towns, such as Cairo, were literally threatened with being inundated. They had to blow levees, which basically means to open up a place for the river water to flow. That flooded farmland in Missouri and Illinois, and we have to be sensitive to the fact that there were real losses there that need to be paid for. That record flooding really slammed the southern part of our State. The devastation was felt in the entire region.

The damage was not just there. I hear from people throughout the southern part of the State who are still struggling today because of this flooding. Anthony Miles in Urbandale, IL, is an example. Flooding from the Ohio River rose so high that he could not even find his lawnmower in the front yard. All he could see was the river water. In Metropolis, IL, my friend Mayor Billy McDaniel said that people are still trying to get the floodwater damage repaired in that town months later. Harrah's casino in Metropolis, which is a major employer and source of revenue in that area, was completely inundated with water, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in repairs need to be done.

Some argue when it comes to these disasters that we cannot afford to help people in America. It appears to me that the guiding principle and motto of the tea party in America is this: Just remember we are all in this alone. That is what we hear over and over from them. Whenever we have a problem facing us in America where we come together as a family to solve it, the tea party stands on the sidelines and says: Don't do it. Let them fail.

This morning, Senator REID quoted a leading tea party advocate in the House who said: The Federal Emergency Management Agency should be put out of business.

I wonder where he lives. I wonder if his home has been spared. I wonder if he has seen people who through no fault of their own have lost everything because of a disaster. When that happens in America, we step in and help one another. We don't get tied up in some political debate. We don't find ourselves completely stopped from stepping forward and doing what is right, and we can't let it happen this time either.

Those who say we have to cut other government programs and education, medical research, for example, to pay for the devastation, whether from Hurricane Irene or flooding or earthquakes or tornadoes, I just don't think they understand there are critical areas of government spending that have been cut back already, and to cut them even further would jeopardize the future of

this country and the well-being of many families.

I wanted to show a chart here which demonstrates the amount requested by the administration over the years by different Presidents for the Disaster Relief Fund. In each and every one of these cases, regardless of whether it was a Democratic or Republican administration, how much of these funds do you think were offset with funds from other accounts in the Federal budget? None. Zero. In 2000, when more than \$3.5 billion was appropriated for disaster recovery, how much was offset? None. In 2005 and 2006, when communities all over the South were recovering from Hurricane Katrina and more than \$2 billion was appropriated each of these 2 years for recovery, how much of that was offset? None. Under Republican Presidents, such as President Bush, as well as Democratic Presidents, such as Presidents Clinton and Obama, we have not required offsets in the rest of the budget when we have literally faced a disaster. We have stepped up, provided the money, and moved forward.

The number and cost of disasters have grown dramatically over the past few years. I do not want to engage the Senate in the debate about climate change because I know people get red in the face and want to come to the floor and tell us their political views of the science of this question. But I will tell you this: The property and casualty insurance industry of America testified before my committee recently and said they see what is coming—more disasters and more costs than we ever imagined. One of the experts said to be prepared to say every summer of your life from this point forward: This is the hottest summer I can ever remember. That is what the future is going to hold.

As these temperature swings get worse and worse, they precipitate these terrible storms. I am not an expert on much, but I am perhaps a little bit of an expert after almost 30 years of flying 48 roundtrips a year between Illinois and Washington, flying on commercial airplanes. I think I know a little bit about that, maybe even a little more than most. This is one of the roughest periods I can remember. For the last several months, the storms and turbulence have been greater than I can ever recall. I hope it is an anomaly. I hope it never happens again. We are told by the experts it is likely to continue. It means more storms, more damage, more disasters, and we do not have the funding here in Washington waiting to pay for it.

We have to step forward as the need arises and meet our obligations to the families and businesses that have been negatively affected. We know that this damage which I showed in the southern part of my State reaches all over the State. This is an area of Galena, IL, the home of General Grant, the President, Ulysses S. Grant, and this area in the northwest part of my State also